

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
EUR-12 SOE-02 DOE-11 TRSE-00 OMB-01 COME-00 EB-08
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R 092000Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY SUVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7143
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SUVA 0391

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, TN, XP
SUBJECT: CHARGE'S FAREWELL VISIT TO TONGA

1. FOLLOWING POINTS OF INTEREST EMERGED DURING MY RECENT FAREWELL
CALLS ON TONGAN LEADERSHIP AND DIPLOMATIC CORPS:

2. RJUMINATING ON CHARACTER OF MONARCHY IN LAST POLYNESIAN
KINGDOM, CROWN PRINCE TUPOUTOA SEES SOME POSSIBLE CHANGES AHEAD.
RATHER THAN MAINTAIN SLOW ACCRETION OF POWER AND INFLUENCE,
ALREADY NEARLY TOTAL, HEIR TO THRONE BELIEVES THERE WILL BE
GRADUAL RELAXATION OF BENEVOLENT GRIP HIS FATHER, KING TUPOU,
HOLDS ONCOUNTRY. CHANGE, IF IT COMES, WILL BE GLACIAL, HOW-
EVER. KING, ACCORDING TUPOUTOA, WOULD LKKE TO APPOINT MORE
COMMONERS TO CABINET IN ORDER DILUTE HISTORICAL DOMINATION BY
NOBLES. BUT QUALITY OF PARLIAMENTARIANS ELECTED TO FILL
RESERVED COMMONER SEATS TOO UNEVEN TO AFFORD MUCH CHOICE;
MANY HAVE SHADY PASTS, INCLUDING SEVERAL CONVICTIONS FOR
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EMBSZZLEMENT. BUT, HE SAID, OCCUPANTS OF SEVEN NOBLES' SEATS
ALSO GENERALLY BELOW CABINET CLASS IN ABILITY, SO SHAKEUP
WILL BE DIFFICULT. (ONE FREQUENTLY RUMORED CHANGE IS ELEVATION
OF CROWN PRINCE TO PREMIERSHIP, SUPERCEDING AILING UNCLE,
APPOINTMENT OF COMMON DAN TUFUI, TALENTED SEC. TO GOVT., AS
MIN. JUSTICE AND POLICE, REPLACING GEORGE AKAUOLA, WHO WOULD
BE ASSIGNED AS HICOM TO UK.) ASKED HOW TONGAN YOUTH VIEW THRONE,

CROWN PRINCE CRYPTICALLY REPLIED, "PROBABLY I DID AS A YOUNG MAN." HE IS ALL OF 30.

3. A FEW LOWER LEVEL CHANGES HAVE TAKEN PLACE. BUSINESSMAN JACK REICHELMMANN, FORMERLY ASSISTANT SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT, HAS BEEN DISPLACED BY TUA TAUMOEPEAU, MARRIED TO QUEEN'S YOUNGEST SISTER, AND TOFA TUITA, MARRIED TO KING'S ONLY DAUGHTER, HAS BEEN MADE ASSISTANT TO THE CROWN PRINCE.

4. LARGE DEGREE OF "MODERNIZATION", SOME OF IT UNDESIRABLE AND CULTURALLY DEVITALIZING, IS BOUND TO COME IF OIL DISCOVERED IN COMMERCIAL QUANTITIES ON TINY ISLANDS. DRILLING NOW UNDERWAY NEAR FAU'AMOTU AIRPORT, AND TONGA SEEMS TO BE MARKING TIME PENDING RESULTS. TWO MORE DRILLING SITES ARE UNDER CONTRACT; IF ALL PROVE DRY DECISION MUST THEN BE MADE ON INVESTMENT IN FOUR REMAINING AREAS OF PROMISE, BUT PROSPECTS SEEMED BRIGHT ENOUGH TO FORMER CHAIRMAN OF WEBB RESOURCES OF COLORADO FOR HIM TO RESIGN TO FORM NEW LOCAL COMPANY, WEBB TONGA, BECOMING ITS MAJOR STOCKHOLDER. TONGAN GOVERNMENT ALSO HAS SHARES, AND SPLIT IS TO BE 60 PERCENT WEBB TONGA AND 40 PERCENT GOT IF OIL DISCOVERED.

5. TONGA'S ENTANGLEMENT IN GET-RICH-QUICK SCHEMES, UPON WHICH WE HAVE REPORTED, SHOWS SOME SIGNS OF UNREVEALING. THE SHADY BANK OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC, GRANTED A TAX-FREE 99-YEAR MONOPOLY OF COMMERCIAL BANKING IN RETURN FOR UNDERTAKING AN ARRAY OF FLASHY COMMERCIAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECTS, HAS NOW BEEN TOLD THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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UNLESS IT STARTS PRODUCING ITS STATUS WILL BE REVOKED, POSSIBLY IN MAY. THE BANK, VISIBLE ONLY ON PAPER, GAINED SOME UNWANTED EXPOSURE WHEN THE CHECKERED BACKGROUND OF PRESIDENT JOHN MEIER, A FORMER HUGHES ASSOCIATE WHO FLED TO CANADA TO AVOID U. S. TAX EVASION CHARGES, WAS SPREAD OVER A FULL PAGE OF LOCAL NEWSPAPER. LOCAJ "MANAGER", AN AUSTRALIAN, HAS SELDOM BEEN SEEN SINCE PUBLICATION. KING TUPOU WAS BANK'S STRONGEST BACKER, AN ENTHUSIASM SHARED BY VIRTUALLY NOONE IN LEADERSHIP, MOST OF WHOM BELIEVE IT PROMOTED BY MEIER FOR FRAUDULENT PURPOSES. MANY BELIEVE STORY PRINTED AT INSTIGATION OF HON. TUITA, MIN. OF LANDS, A MAN OF RECTITUDE AND DETERMINATION WHOSE SON MARRIED KING'S ONLY DAUGHTER. WHOLE AFFAIRS IS TONGA'S RIPLEST SCANDAL, WHICH IT IS FEARED MAY INHIBIT NEEDED INVESTMENT BY REPUTABLE INTERESTS.

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6. GOT ALSO MAY BE ON VERGE OF REVERSING DECISION WHICH REPORTEDLY WOULD HAVE GIVEN JAPANESE CONSORTIUM EXCLUSIVE FISHING RIGHTS IN TONGAN WATERS. IN RETURN FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF FISH PROCESSING PLANT. SOVIETS HAVE CEASED APPROACHES TO GOT IN RESPECT ON-SHORE FISHING FACILITIES, HAVE TAKEN NO OTHER INITIATIVES PAST SEVERAL MONTHS.

7. CHRONIC SHIPPING PROBLEMS HAVE BESET TONGA DURING MY TERM. STILL STALLED OWING TO UNWISE PRIOR COMMITMENT TO DANISH LAURITZEN LINE, IS CONFLICTING, BUT MORE ADVANTAGEOUS, AGREEMENT WITH GERMAN COLOMBUS LINE. IT PRODIES FOR DM 9 MILLION GFR LOAN TO BUILD AN OCEAN-GOING FREIGHTER AS TONGA'S CONTRIBUTION TO REGIONAL FORUM LINE AND AN INTERISLAND VESSEL, BOTH IN GERMAN YEARS LOAN IS AT 3/4 PERCENT INTEREST FOR 50 YEARS WITH TEN YEAR GRACE PERIOD. NEW ZEALANDERS, AS MOST INFLUENTIAL FOREIGN PRESENCE IN TONGA, ARE DNEAVORING GET COLUMBUS LINE AS AGENTS GERMAN GOVT. TO BUY OUT LAURITZEN CONTRACT.

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8. VERY ACTIVE RESIDENT NEW ZEALAND HIGH COMMISSIONER, DON HUNN, CORROBORATED MY CONCLUSION THAT PRIME MIN AND CROWN PRINCE, ESPECIALLY LATTER, HAVE SHIFTED VIEWS IN RESPECT TO RE-LIABILITY OF BIG-POWER FRIENDS. EARLIER FEELING, AND CROWN PRINCE HAS HINTED AT THIS ON PAST OCCASIONS, WAS THAT LARGER COUNTRIES WOULD NEVER DEFEND TONGA IN GENERAL CONFLICT, THUS IT BEST HAVE FRIENDLY LINKS WITH ALL -- INCLUDING SOVIETS AND PRC.

(TONGA NOW RECOGNIZES ROC.) DURING THIS VISIT, TUPOUTOA, WHO HANDLES FOREIGN AFFAIRS ON DAY-TO-DAY BASIS, STRESSED THAT HE SEES ANZUS AS TONGA'S ONLY SHIELD. HE HAS BECOME OUTSPOKENLY SUSPICIOUS OF SOVIET, LESS SO OF PRC, INTENTIONS IN THE AREA -- NOTING IN SUPPORT OF THIS THAT ENTIRE TOP LEADERSHIP OF SOVIET NAVY COMPOSED OF PACIFIC FLEET VETERANS.

9. HUNN, WHO HAS DEVELOPED VERY CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH PRINCE, CONFIRMED TUPOUTOA'S NEW CONFIDENCE IN ANZUS, OBSERVING THAT PRIOR TO THIS GOT WOULD NOT HAVE PERMITTED ENTRY 200 NEW ZEALAND MEDICAL TROOPS NOW PRESENT ON AID PROJECT, OR RECENT VISIT HEAD OF NEW ZEALAND SECURITY SERVICE (MOLYNEAUX).

10. FINAL ROUND OF CALLS REVEALED NO MOMENTOUS DEVELOPMENTS IN SOMNOLENT LITTLE KINGDOM -- BAR POSSIBILITY OF A MAJOR OIL STRIKE -- BUT CONFIRMED THE GOOD HEALTH OF OUR CONNECTIONS WITH THE AFFABLE TONGANS AND FRIENDSHIP THE LEADERSHIP HOLDS FOR THE UNITED STATES AND ITS REPRESENTATIVES. UNFORTUNATELY, THE KING WAS ABROAD SO NO FAREWELL AUDIENCE WAS POSSIBLE.
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